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~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~

COUNTRY Ecuador

CIA

25X1A2g

SUBJECT Port Conditions at Guayaquil

DATE 29 Jan 53

PLACE ACQUIRED -----  
(BY SOURCE)

Supplement to

25X1A2g

DATE ACQUIRED 25X1A6a  
(BY SOURCE)

Response to

25X1A2g

DATE (OF INFO) Dec 53 and prior months

- 25X1A8a
1. As of December 1953 serious congestion was again expected at the port of Guayaquil, Ecuador, according to insurance sources.
  2. Although ocean steamers can proceed up the Guayas River the 35 miles to the port of Guayaquil, there is not sufficient depth of water or facilities to go alongside in the port. Consequently, they must discharge cargo into Customs-owned lighters. Lighters are discharged at the Fiscal Mole (with the exception of the Tropical Fruit Company vessels, which are only 500 tons net and can go alongside the Fiscal Mole). Vessels over 23½ feet in draft are permitted to discharge at Puna Island. This cargo too is transported to the Fiscal Mole in Guayaquil by Customs lighters. December 1953
  3. Receipts are issued at the Fiscal Mole and endorsed as to the condition of the goods when unloaded ex ocean carriers. At this point they come into Customs possession.
  4. The Fiscal Mole, the Customs wharf in Guayaquil, is only partially roofed. This roof is in poor condition and is not rainproof. There is only one corrugated iron warehouse for valuable goods, the rest of the area being merely walled off from the public.
  5. The Customs warehouses proper are about a hundred yards distant from the Fiscal Mole and receipts are issued by the Customs warehouse to the Superintendent of the Mole.
  6. The Customs authorities generally refuse all claims filed against them and will only consider those where it can be definitely established goods were stolen while in the Customs possession.

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7. Of the 46 lighters in use in December 1953 only 17 are in good condition and have tarpaulins; 19 are in poor condition but still useable, many without tarpaulins; and the remaining 10 are in bad shape and generally without any tarpaulins.
8. During the rainy season from January to May inclusive, frequent stoppages occur in cargo handling in order to rig tarpaulins. Also delays occur in lightering. This condition, combined with the shortage of space in the Customs, contributed to the serious congestion during 1953, when at times the Customs were obliged to rent private warehouses remote from their premises, thus adding to the confusion. Congestion was also aggravated by heavy rains washing out the railway track through the mountains into the interior.
9. Indications are that congestion cannot be really overcome until proper berthing facilities enabling ocean steamers to go alongside at Guayaquil are available together with proper Customs storage. [December 1953]

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